

NSC 1298/01/027

Saudi Arabia

Secret (GDS) *NoDIS*

May 26, 1973
(~~Quarles~~) (Saunders)

President's Monday Briefing

For HAK

Israeli Reaction to F-4s to Saudi Arabia

State Dept. review completed

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The initial Israeli reaction to the possibility that the US may sell F-4 Phantoms to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait has been predictably negative. Foreign Minister Eban, speaking on behalf of Prime Minister Meir, has informed the State Department that Israel is "all out" against these sales. The full Israeli reaction can be expected early this week.

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We can anticipate that the Israelis will argue that ~~they cannot be~~ *we will seem to be yielding* to Arab oil pressures and will thereby encourage Arab feeling that such pressure offers an alternative to negotiating with Israel; ~~cooperative on peace efforts in those circumstances~~ that pending

Israeli arms requests must be dealt with immediately; and that Israeli willingness to ~~cooperate~~ cooperate with the Administration on most-favored-nation treatment for the Soviet Union might be reconsidered. *It seems to me (Saunders) that a firm response is called for,*

~~strong response~~ *decisions* in principle to sell F-4s to our Arab friends ~~are not~~ *were taken primarily in the context of major US interests in* related to the Arab-Israeli

conflict, and should not be allowed to influence our continuing search for a negotiated settlement. ~~will probably be required to~~ *A decision on Israel's aircraft requests may help mute reaction a bit, and the Israelis should note that a* ~~offset the rather apologetic tone in which we first informed the~~ *strong negative reaction from them will only help strengthen the* ~~Arab view that these decisions represent a US shift~~ *away from Israel. We have a strong interest in maintaining the*

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position that the Persian Gulf and the Arab-Israel problem are separate.

the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, need not be

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